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SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR P, IO, EB, WHA/CCA, NEA

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [AORC](#) [ECON](#) [CU](#)
SUBJECT: UNGA: UN PASSES 17TH ANNUAL RESOLUTION AGAINST THE
CUBAN EMBARGO

REF: STATE 115034

¶1. Summary: In plenary session on October 29, the UN General Assembly (UNGA) passed its 17th annual resolution condemning the United States embargo on Cuba with near unanimity, slightly more one-sided than last year. The usual diatribes were accompanied by more measured language from the EU and Norway. The final score was 185-3-2, with two absences. The President of the General Assembly (PGA) broke new ground in condemning the United States and hinted at his views of UN reform. End Summary.

¶2. After PGA Miguel Brockmann d'Escoto introduced the Secretary-General's report (A/63/93), he opened debate on the Resolution on the Necessity of Ending the Economic, Commercial and Financial Embargo Imposed by the United States of America Against Cuba (A/63/L.4).

¶3. The PGA closed the list after 30 speakers signed up, from Antigua and Barbuda (on behalf of the G77), Egypt (for the Non-Aligned Movement), Guyana (for CARICOM), Venezuela, Mexico, Vietnam, Sudan, South Africa, China, Algeria, Iran, India, Russia, Angola, Zambia, the United States, Nicaragua, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Tanzania, Cuba, France (for the EU), Brazil, Laos, Indonesia, Burma, Belarus, Ecuador, Syria, Norway and Uganda.

¶4. Three hours and five minutes of debate yielded 22 accusations of violating international law, 23 criticisms of unilateralism, and 29 uses of the word "extraterritorial." French and Norwegian delegates were the only Member States to hedge, admitting this is "primarily a bilateral matter between the United States and Cuba" but nevertheless calling for an end to the embargo. South African PermRep Dumisani Kumalo closed his remarks with "Viva Commandante Fidel."

¶5. Russia, China and Vietnam supported the "rights of nations" to choose their own political systems without "interference." Venezuela, Vietnam, China and India all dwelled on hardships endured by the Cuban people, especially women and children, allegedly due to the embargo. Mexico said that any sanctions should be based on UN decisions. With Egyptian PermRep Maged Abdelaziz as spokesman, the Non-Aligned Movement took the rhetoric one step further, calling for USG compensation to Cuba. Syria used the occasion to criticize the United States for, most recently, "flagrant aggression against Syria."

¶6. Less stridently, French Deputy PermRep Jean-Pierre Lacroix claimed the embargo hampers Cuba's development. He urged the United States to implement the May 18, 1998 London Understanding covering waivers for Titles III and IV of the Helms-Burton Act. Lacroix noted that the human rights situation in Cuba has not fundamentally changed, that the Government of Cuba (GoC) continues to deny freedoms to its

citizens, and Cuba's achievements are undermined by its restrictions on human rights. Lacroix called for freedom of expression and information as well as the unconditional release all political prisoners.

¶7. Cuban FM Felipe Perez Roque recounted suffering in Cuba, and departing from his prepared text, worried about the health of his children in light of the embargo. Addressing the United States, Perez lectured, "Your Secretary of State doesn't come to this debate because she has nothing to say. You use lies, we use the truth. You threaten, we never threaten...You gentlemen should feel ashamed, you are alone...the embargo is a genocidal and illegal policy."

¶8. Received with whooping and widespread loud applause, the final count was 185 votes for resolution 63/7, three opposing (United States, Israel and Palau), two abstentions (the Marshall Islands and Micronesia), and two absences (Iraq and El Salvador). Since the previous year's resolution 62/3 had 184 votes, four opposing votes, one abstention, and three absences, the United States slipped one notch in each voting category. The Marshall Islands changed last year's vote to an abstention, and Albania, an absentee last year, voted for the resolution.

¶10. PGA d'Escoto closed the meeting commenting on the "illegal criminal embargo" against his "sister country" and USG "unwholesome stubbornness," and praise for "Fidel, a hero of international solidarity." The PGA remarked that the United States "has been rightfully repudiated and condemned...We will do all we can to insure the overwhelming opinion here is no longer flouted."

¶11. USDel delivered reftel remarks, available in full at the Mission's web site, www.usunewyork.usmission.gov.
Khalilzad